

The Energy Crisis - Farmhouses and Farm Offices

Traditional farmhouses are often relatively inefficient when it comes to energy use and with the increasing price of energy, many are looking at how they can reduce energy usage and subsequently costs within the farmhouse that doubles up as the office in many cases.

The structure, size and age of a farmhouse will vary significantly from farm to farm. Some will be modern, some very old, some maybe even listed.

While for more modern buildings, insulation on walls or double glazing will be effective however for older historic buildings there is the aesthetic of the building to think about as well as taking care to not add to damp problems so expert advice should always be sought for more significant changes or longer-term investments.

However, there are some simple steps that everybody can take to understand their energy use better and identify any potential savings that could be made.



The first step in this process is to monitor and review your current energy usage to identify any potential areas for savings. This can include installing a smart meter. Unlike the standard meter, smart meters will record half hourly price and consumption data showing the cost and amount of energy you are using. These meters can also provide automatic meter readings to your energy supplier which reduces the occurrence of inflated estimated bills which can result in an increase to your direct debit payment potentially unnecessarily.

There are a number of small changes to your routine that can reduce day-to-day energy usage and keep heat in a farmhouse.

- Ensure appliances and lights are switched off and not just left on standby.
- Shut shutters on windows (if available) or hang heavy curtains on windows to assist with draught proofing.
- Ensure when replacing bulbs that you are selecting LED or energy saving bulbs.
- Ensure your radiators aren't blocked by furniture.



In terms of longer-term investments to improve energy efficiency, there are a few things that could be considered.

- Adding insulation to the loft and loft access hatch can preserve heat. Typically, 25% of heat is lost through the roof.
- Ensure that all heating and hot water pipework is well insulated.

- Older houses are generally designed to be heated one room at a time. You can recreate this heating effect by manually controlling thermostat valves. Programmable wi-fi radiator valves are becoming more readily available to assist with this.

In summary, the top 5 tips to help improve energy efficiency and energy usage in farmhouses would be:

- 1) Identify what you use, where you use it and switch off what you can.
- 2) Maintain the building fabric and your heating system.
- 3) Replace incandescent and halogen bulbs with LED ones.
- 4) Install simple efficiency measures such thick curtains or other draught proofing measures.
- 5) If you need to reduce usage further, seek specialist advice for long term investments suitable for your house type.

[Where to get more information & Support](#)

[Home Energy Scotland](#)

[Energy Saving Trust](#)

For older buildings, [Historic Environment Scotland](#)

